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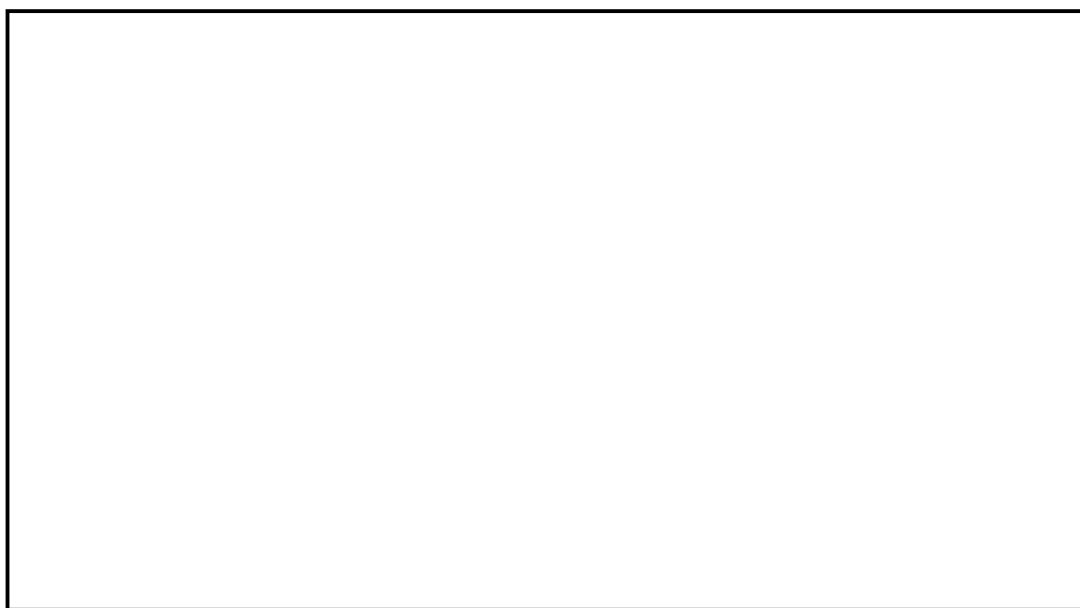
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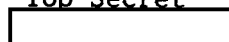
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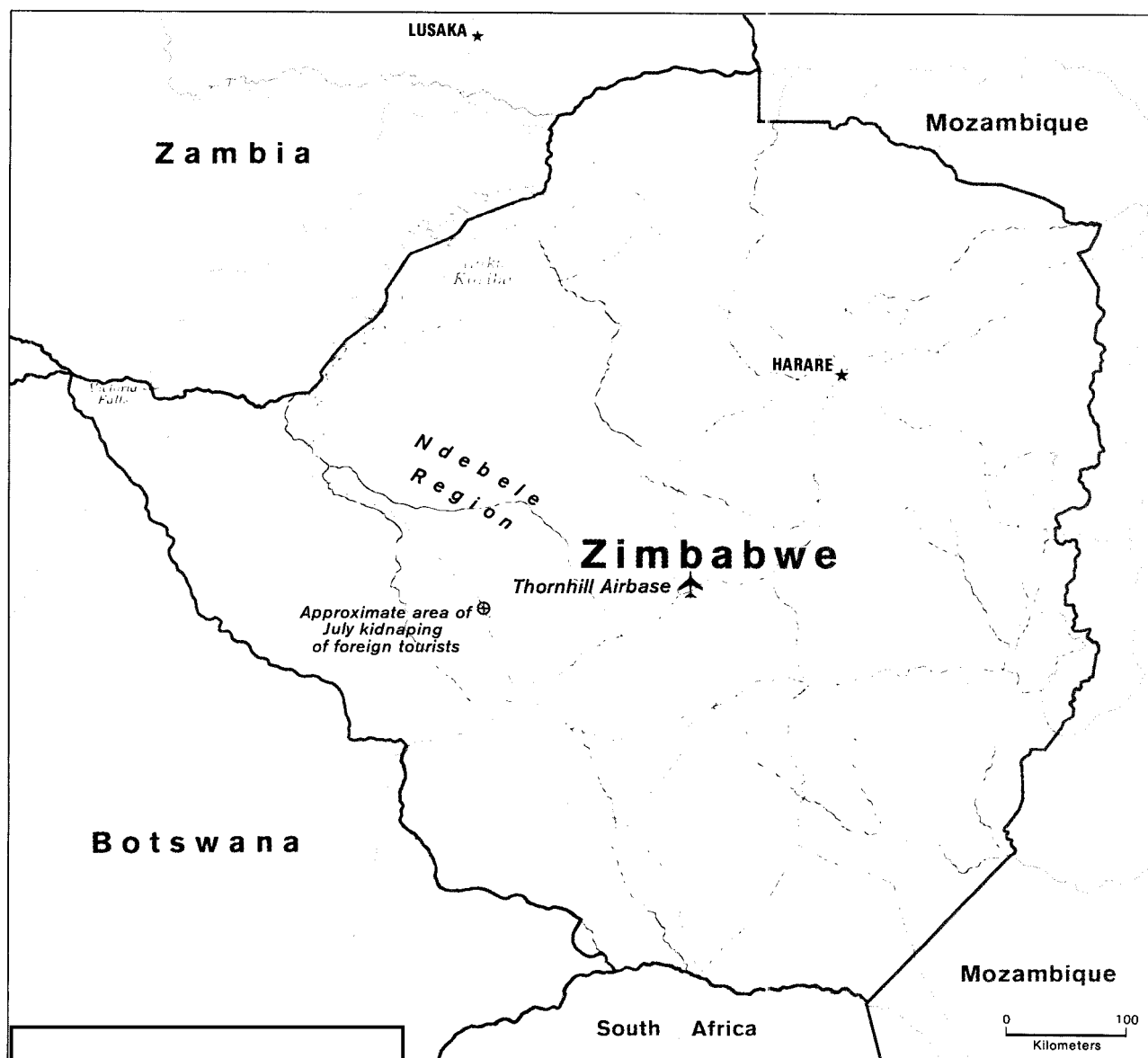
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Special Analysis

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ZIMBABWE: Government Cracks Down on Dissidence

The government's harsh response to recent violence by dissidents threatens to undermine the moderate course Prime Minister Mugabe has been pursuing.

[redacted] the regime's tough tactics have aggravated resentments among the Ndebele minority--the group that backs Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union party. Such crackdowns could provoke serious new unrest in the coming months.

The latest wave of dissident violence has been carried out primarily by former ZAPU guerrillas--probably numbering between 800 and 1,300--who have been mustered out of the Army or have deserted. The trouble began in February, when Nkomo was dismissed from the cabinet and two senior ZAPU military men were arrested on charges of caching arms and plotting against the government.

The violence--initially little more than lawlessness or banditry--has assumed greater political overtones in the past few months. In June armed dissidents attacked Mugabe's home.

A month later dissidents kidnaped six foreign tourists and threatened to kill them if the ZAPU military leaders were not released. The tourists still have not been found.

Dissidents probably were not responsible for an attack in July on Thornhill Air Force Base that destroyed 20 percent of Zimbabwe's combat aircraft. The culprits appear to have been former Rhodesian security men working for the South Africans, and they probably were helped by lower level white officers in the Air Force.

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Growing Repression

The government previously had detained a number of suspected dissidents for long periods without formally charging them. Since the attacks in July, however, actions by security forces have become harsher and less disciplined. [REDACTED]

Army troops searching for the kidnaped tourists have treated rural Ndebele villagers brutally, with several confirmed killings and numerous reports of violent interrogations. Following the attack on the airbase, at least some of the white officers were seized and tortured, resulting in apparently spurious confessions by senior officers. The mutilated bodies of several dissidents also have been found near military installations. [REDACTED]

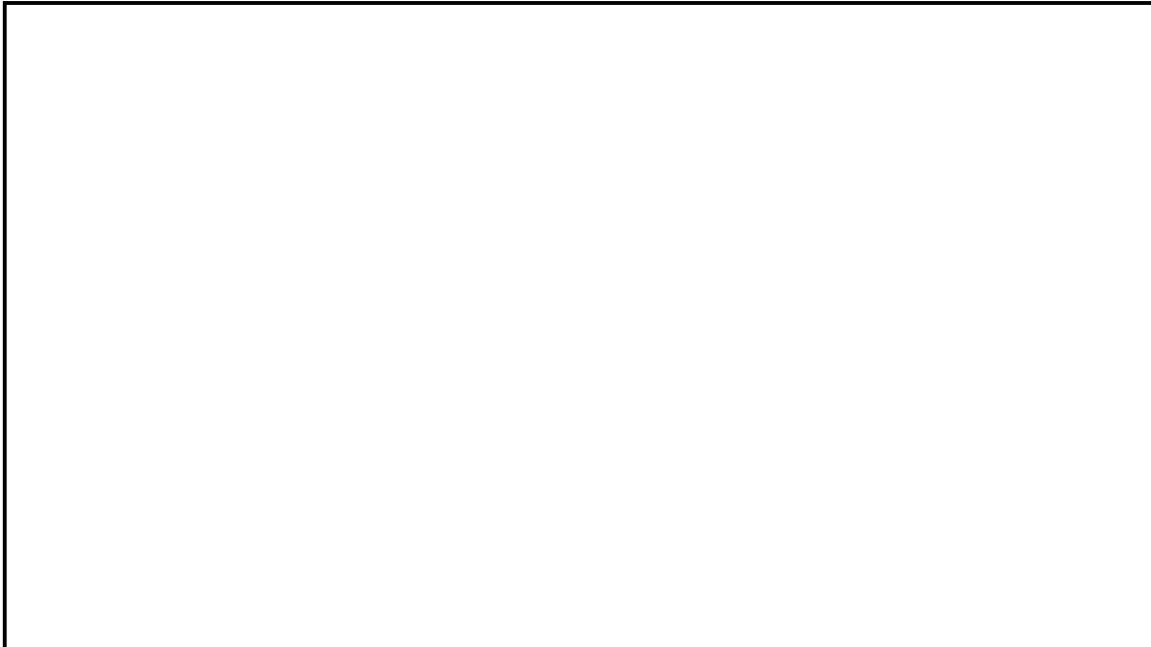
In addition, the government has resumed executions, imposed widespread curfews, restricted the foreign press, and detained more than 400 people in the Ndebele region. It also has announced plans for a new 20,000-man militia to serve as its watchdog. [REDACTED]

More repressive methods also are being used in non-security matters. To ration goods and prevent hoarding, the Ministry of Trade recently was granted broad powers, including the right to search homes and seize property without a warrant. The government--in accordance with preindependence agreements--recently appointed its first ombudsman but exempted from his purview the actions of the President, the Prime Minister, all cabinet officers, and the security forces. [REDACTED]


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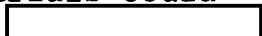
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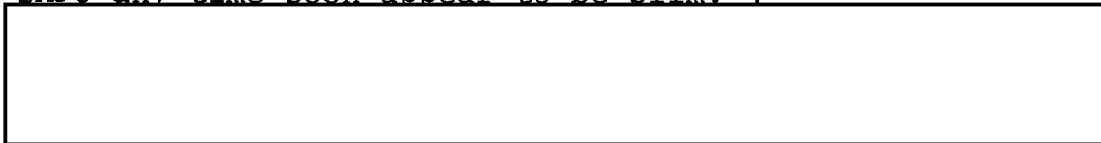


Prospects

The Ndebele are likely to view the tough security policies and the lack of government initiatives to win their support as further evidence that there is no role for them in a Shona-dominated society. This in turn could lead more of the 13,500 ZAPU members in the Army to desert and join the dissidents. 


In addition, many dissidents--including the two senior ZAPU military men--are scheduled to be tried for treason over the next few months. These trials could touch off serious outbreaks of violence. 

The odds favoring rapprochement between ZANU and ZAPU any time soon appear to be slim. 



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Mugabe subsequently charged publicly that Nkomo had conspired with the Soviets to seize power at the time of independence. ZANU officials apparently still believe that ZAPU and the Soviets--who supported Nkomo during the civil war--are linked. The Soviets, however, have tried for some time to establish good relations with Mugabe. [REDACTED]

Moscow has been annoyed with Mugabe's snubs but has not directly supported or encouraged ZAPU elements. Nevertheless, civil unrest would serve Soviet interests if it discouraged Western investments and economic assistance and helped to discredit Mugabe's moderate socialist economic course. [REDACTED]

In the meantime, the fact that white Air Force officers were tortured will further weaken morale among the white population, which still plays a vital role in the economy. Many Air Force officers are said to have resigned recently. [REDACTED]



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